

† Bishop Themis of Nicopolis †



“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). Known as the Great Commission, this is the final commandment given to us by Christ. Few in the history of the world have heeded this call as Bishop Themistocles of Nicopolis has.

In his youth, as a proud atheist and Marxist, he started Australia's first long-haired Rock-and-Roll band known as “The Flies”, and it grew to such popularity that they toured with “The Rolling Stones”. Having experienced a mystical vision, Themis turned to Christ. He gave all he had to the poor and was tonsured a monk. He would spend the next thirty years in theological academia studying at Harvard, Princeton, Brown, Holy Cross G.O. School of Theology, and St. Andrew's Universities. He acquired multiple doctorates and graduate degrees, becoming a world-class biblical scholar and professor. Although an accomplished theologian, he felt he was not fulfilling the **Great Commission**. Desiring to help the poorest of the poor, he was ordained

a priest and joined the mission in Kenya. Still not satisfied he sought permission to go to the most impoverished country in the world, Sierra Leone. In 2007 permission was granted by Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandria and All Africa. What Themis has done since, is nothing short of miraculous. With the support of Paradise 4 Kids, a global charity that was established to help his Mission, thousands of the poorest people in West Africa have been assisted. Several churches, schools, a teacher's college, orphanages, medical clinics, housing communities, and so much more. Bishop Themis baptized hundreds into the Orthodox Church, and untold thousands have been helped through the Mission. In 2022, by unanimous vote of the Holy Synod of Africa, Themis was elevated to the Episcopacy and given the title Bishop of Nicopolis. He now oversees the Archdiocesan District of Sierra Leone, comprised of seven nations in West Africa.

Saint John Chrysostom wrote that it is a greater deed to feed the hungry than it is to raise the dead. As Orthodox Christians, we understand that the **Great Commission** was not just given to the Apostles, but it is Christ's direct call to action for each of us. Not all of us are able to leave our lives and go to the ends of the earth for the sake of poor in the name of Christ. Yet we can fulfill the commandment in other ways and help the needy.

Please pray for His Grace Bishop Themis and for his Holy Mission, that the Lord may grant him many more years to serve His Church!

For more information on Bishop Themis and his Mission please visit:

Videos: vimeo.com/30911645

YouTube: youtube.com/watch?v=YOQqHBKgZT0

Website: www.paradise4kids.org